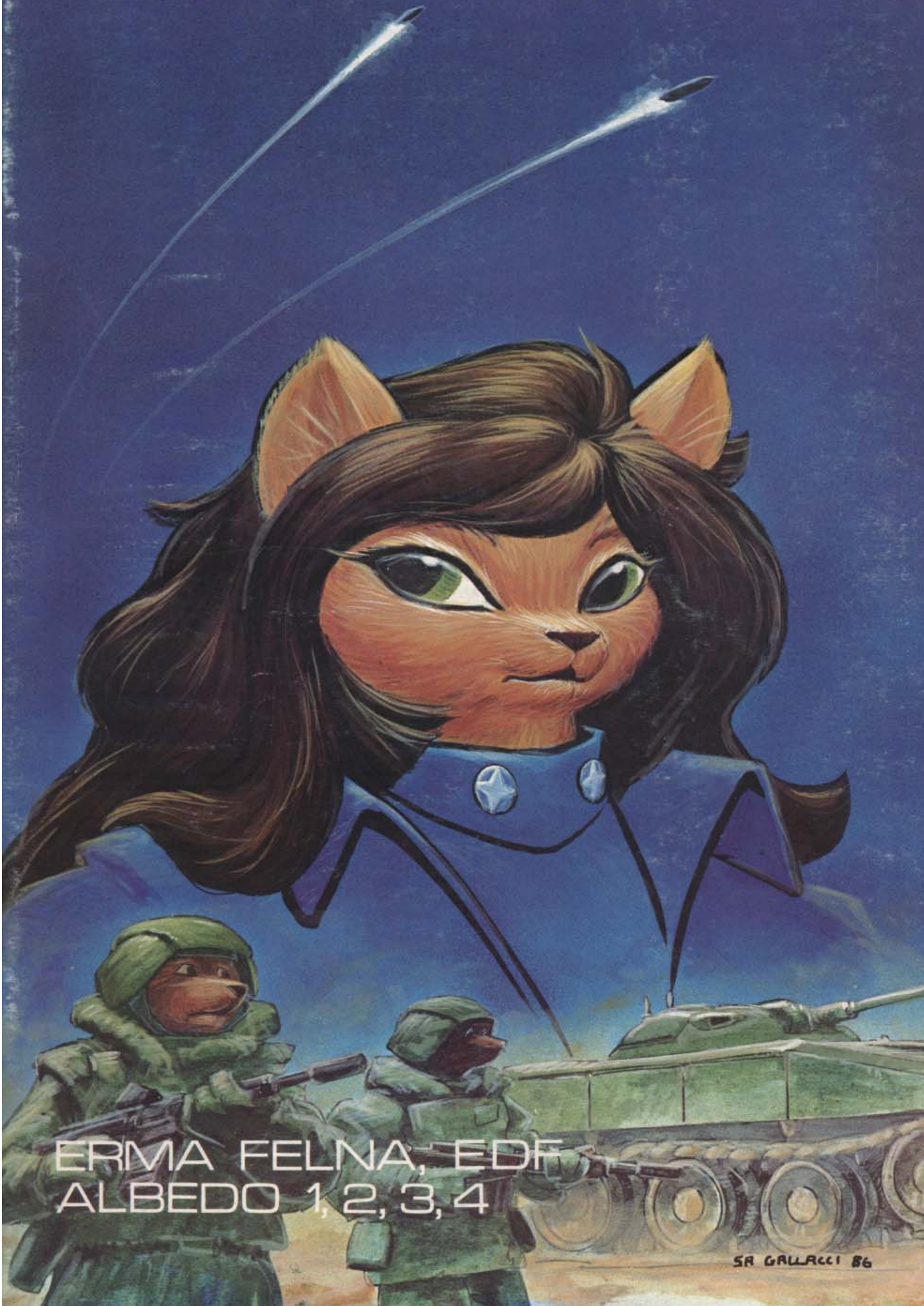
THOUGHTS & IMAGES

COMMAND REVIEW VOL 1

JOURNAL OF THE EXTRAPLANETARY DEFENSE FORCE $4.00



The story of Erma Felna in the service of the Extraplanetary Defense Force has been chronicled in the periodical ALBEDO, Anthropomorphics, for two years now. The ever growing interest in her exploits and the scenario she inhabits has far exceeded the number of published copies many-fold. So it is with considerable interest that this volume has been prepared. It covers the activities around Erma's fifth year of active duty with the EDF, followed in the first four issues of ALBEDO.

For the interested, the printing history is as follows. ALBEDO nr1, June, 1984, 500 copies, 5-color cover, September, 1984, 1500 copies, 4-color cover. Also includes the work of Marc Schirmeister and Stan Sakai. ALBEDO nr2, November, 1984, 2000 copies. An illustrated poem by Lela Dowling, and the first appearance of Stan Sakai's *Usagi Yojimbo* was also in this issue. ALBEDO nr3, May, 1985, 10,000 copies. Stan Sakai again contributes. ALBEDO nr4, August, 1985, 6000 copies. This was also the last appearance of Stan Sakai's *Usagi Yojimbo* for ALBEDO.

An earlier appearance, in a more amateur form, roughly equivalent to the first three pages of episode one, was in the comic fannish publication, HUZZAH!, in 1978. ALBEDO nr0, the prototype issue, contains nothing, aside from an announcement, pertaining to Erma Felna.

A Brief Background of Erma's Universe.

Nearly two hundred years before Erma, the various intelligent species on the planet Arras Chnka realized that they had no past, no way to account for the creation of their technic civilization. The best guess, so far, is that everyone was a genetic artifact, and had been colonized on planet by an as yet unknown agency.

The thought of an extraplanetary or more likely, extrastellar origin helped motivate their own space exploration efforts. Interplanetary travel was made practical with an efficient fusion propulsion system. Later, interstellar travel became feasible with the development of the so-called Jump Drive. It would effectively tweak one outside the universe and then back again, only the return point would be light-years distant. The only limits are the necessity of operating it well outside the gravitational influences of a stellar system, often several light-hours distant. Then, the destination must be the next gravity well in the line of flight. Even a short trip might take some months as the ship must accelerate well out of system, limited to Gee tolerances of the passengers; then, while the jump itself is instantaneous, the ship must decelerate back down to make planet fall. No anti-acceleration or anti-gravity technologies exist, and while basic research continues, most technologies seem to have plateaued out over the last century.

With interstellar capabilities available, various colonization efforts were launched. The first wave was a carefully organized and systematic effort that established permanent settlements on fifteen planets. The dedication and professionalism in these early colonists became a part of their now distinctive cultures.

The next wave of colonies, more than fifty, were more casual in approach and their populations were often motivated to establish more divergent socio-economic environments. Two of these, Hiahhohch and Baliannian, made up mostly of rabbits, decided that continued expansion of their particular system would be easier by taking over the built-up infrastructures of their neighbors rather than develop new worlds from scratch.

So began a messy and protracted war between the now so-called Independent Lepine Republic and the hastily formed Confederation, made up of most of the older established colonies. The Confederation established the Extraplanetary Defense Force as a combined military organization to deal with the ILR or any other threat to interstellar peace.

Erma's father, Kanoc, was among the first grduates of the EDF academy and participated in several of the later, nastier campaigns. Very late in the war, he was captured and was subjected to insidious psychological torture. It was only years after his repatriation that the extent manifested itself. Meanwhile, young Erma was a promising student and soon entered the Homeguard, and eventually was accepted into the EDF.

Here is the revised standard alphabet for the scenario. Spelling is strictly phonetic, and there are no vowel combination rules or silent letters. Since their pronunciation is somewhat similar to non-English European, several phonemes are not represented. Also, their numeric system is actually in base eight, rather than base ten, so this version is used as a convenience to the reader.

A AE B D E EE V F J G H I IE CH K

L N M OO OA P R Z SH S TH T U EU X

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

COMMAND REVIEW vol. 1, July, 1986. Published by Thoughts & Images, which is solely owned and copyright © 1986 by Steven A. Gallacci. Volume 2 tentatively scheduled for Spring 1987. Copies are available for $4, which includes postage, from Steven A. Gallacci, P.O. Box 19419, Seattle, WA 98109.

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The story behind 6 is simply one of not having all the complicated factors worked out and ready to do yet. So, I took an old bit of Erma's background and used it as a flash-back piece. The shooty mouse is part of a civil terrorism cult intent on keeping a dangerous edge on society. They have no other apparent political motivations and strike within ILR space as often as Confed or independent rim space, and always engage in open, public violence, never sabotage or covert actions. Since their actions are usually suicidal there is little little else known about them, though it is hoped, while they're widespread, there are very few of them.

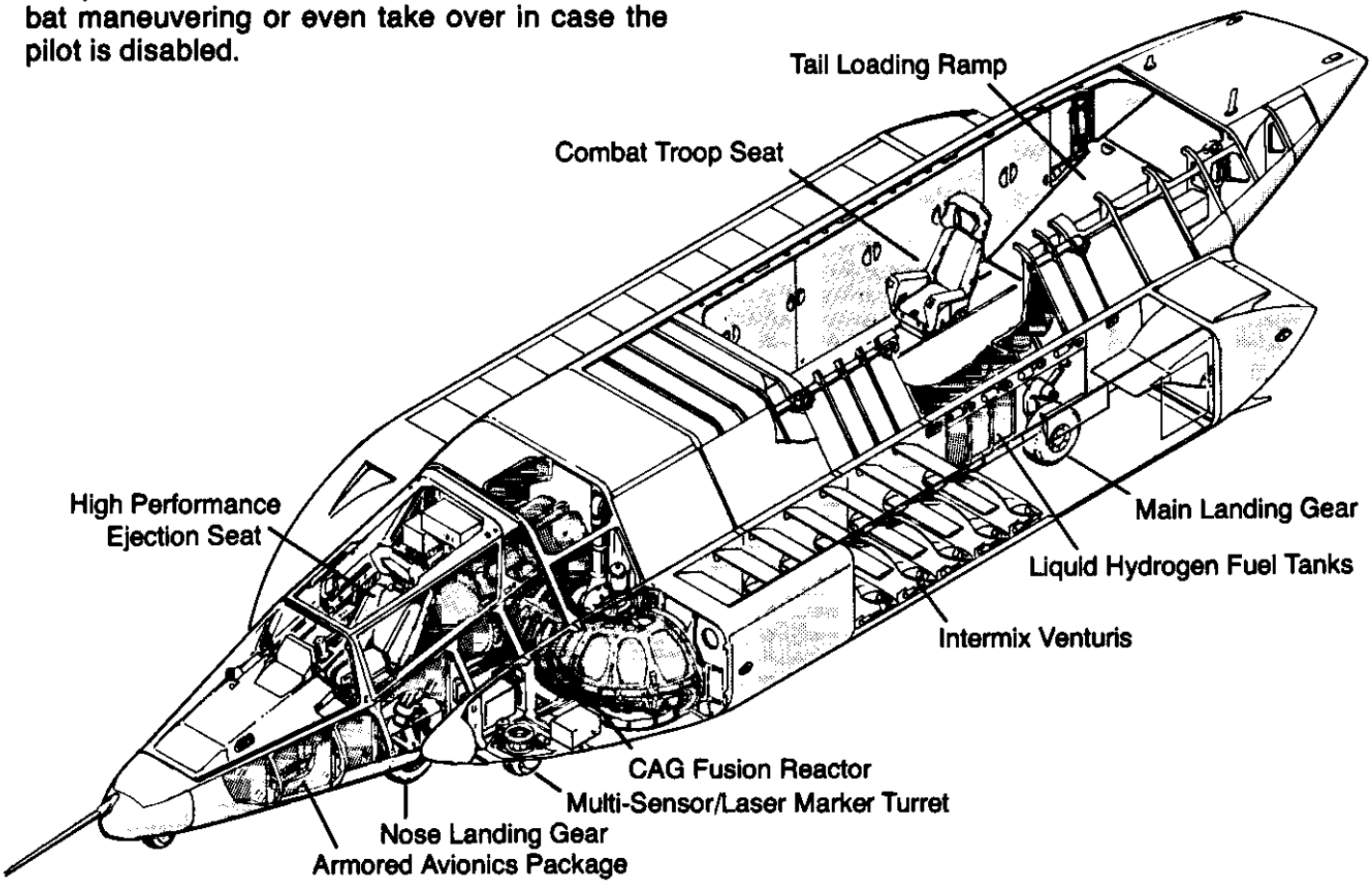
And now, a little technical bit on the aerodynes. The Aero 3 is a standard light utility aerodyne. Its power source is a small CAG fusion reactor that provides high pressure, super heated hydrogen which is routed through an array of intermix venturies to mix with the atmosphere and then out for vertical or horizontal thrust. Maneuvering for all axis are by differential thrust, managed by onboard computer, which gets its inputs from the pilot's control grips and pedals.

The pilot's inputs, however, are for desired attitude, rather than direct control, and the computer arranges the thrust to suit, keeping track of attitude and environment so as to avoid any "controlled conflicts" into the ground or objects. The computer can also assist in fire control and combat maneuvering or even take over in case the pilot is disabled.

The Aero 3 has provision for one or two pilots or pilot/crew specialist and eight to ten passengers or six troops, or, in a cargo configuration, up to 2,000 Kg and retain a full fuel load and performance numbers. Though there is surplus power for supersonic flight, the craft's normal operating air speed is high subsonic, limited by aeroheating restrictions on the airframe. With additional fuel and simple preparation, the Aero 3 can go exo-atmospheric or even orbital, providing the flight profile limits heat exposure.

In combat configuration, the Aero 3 can carry a wide variety of weapons, including automatic cannons or beam generators in several optional ventral turret positions. The cockpit and critical avionics are heavily armored and the fuel tanks have extra amor and increased volume to offset the increased rate of consumption with the greater weight.

The Aero 3, though still capable system, is being phased out of front line units in favor of Aero 6, which can carry substancially more weapons and armor without loss of performance. It will still be found with Homeguard and training units for the foreseeable future.



Going into part 9 was a little like the writing dilemma facing me back around part 6. Things were progressing faster than I had anticipated, leaving me with empty pages to fill and not necessarily having a good idea what to fill them with. The "mopping-up" action in the space station was, now in retrospect, little more than filler and a quick dose of violent action, though it did try to show some clever things a computer could do. The empty word balloons were clearly a failed attempt to suggest conversation stifled by jamming, and a fair amount of significant action was lost with the lack of dialog or exposition.

On a more positive note, Monika Livingston assisted on some of the inks, primarilly the figures, while I did backgrounds and finishing. We'd already done some work together, she doing similar inking for *Birthright*.

While out of the picture throughout most of the Ekosiak action, one of the more popular characters of the series was Colonel Hitzok, Commander of Homeguard forces on planet. He was shot and pretty much put out of action back in episode five. Like Secretary Shato, he was suspicious of the "management" of the civil unrest, and in an unpursued subplot, he would have independently discovered the machinations of Aito Kho, the instigator of the crisis, through his monitoring of the media and deductive analysis of other factors which would have been revealed.

ONNI HITZOK
CSSN 287 843 2131
Homeguard Colonel, Ekosiak
Born: SD 161.02.08 Unincorporated Territory, Ekosiak.

Colonel Hitzok's family was among the original colonists on Ekosiak, and up to his generation, had been ground surveying the entire planet. He himself was born during an ecological census in a remote area. Soon after, his immediate care-givers in the extended family settled in Hicho to posts in the scientific establishment. Young Onni, while an adequate academic, was more inclined to out-of-doors activities, first the field work of an ecologist, and later, the Homeguard special forces, as a scout and extended-duration insurgent/counter-insurgent field operative. As there was no likely need for such specialized troops, they were kept within the ranks of the regular forces and it was there he quickly rose to command. he has passed up opportunities to go into EDF service, being more interested in remaining local. That position has generated speculation of anti-centerist or separatist political leanings, however, he has remained largely apolitical, sensitive to the influence he commands.

Gaming specs:
Str.: 11 M.Dex.: 9 Rea.: 12 Dri.: 12
Sta.: 9 Co-o.: 9 Int.: 12 Stb.: 14
Disposition: Responsible, Restrained. S.P.I. Rating: 4.0
Skill gradings: Command: 1, Combat weapons B,
Field craft: A

ELAKI KALAKAHAII
CSSN 492 882 3942
Civil Service Grade equivalent 7
Born SD 159.12.23 Euchawah Mining Nr. 4
Darren

Elaki was born within the extended families that made up the employees of Enchawah Industries, a large, independent manufacturing and services company which operates throughout the outer and unalligned systems. Early on, her immediate family group became colonists on an outer world, Endly, where she grew up. The upland region where the family homesteaded was rich in fossils and Elaki became an enthusiastic amateur paleongologist. Later, when she went to Danet for advanced education, she specialized in archeology and xenology, and became a Confed research specialist, assigned to the EDF FTD (Foreign Technologies Division) teams that run patrol routes throughout the edges of known space. The bulk of these missions is to detect and assess ILR developments, especially for any potential military intent. At the same time, it is hoped that there might be found evidence of alien or ancient artifacts, which could help answer questions about their origins and place in the galaxy.

Elaki is very dedicated to her calling and could be considered scholarly and under-sociable. However, among family and long-term acquaintances, she can be very warm and affectionate. Similarly while on assignment, her personal space tends to be sparse and utilitarian, however she maintains a personal residence on Endly at her family's agricultural collective which is cozy and cluttered with art objects and personal odds and ends. Physically, Elaki is a feline (Bobcat), 148 cm tall. Her fur is a light gray mottle with tawny highlights. She usually wears outfits derived from Enchawah fashions, though coming from Endly, they are adapted to reflect the cool, wet uplands, usually long, heavy overwear in rich earth-tones.

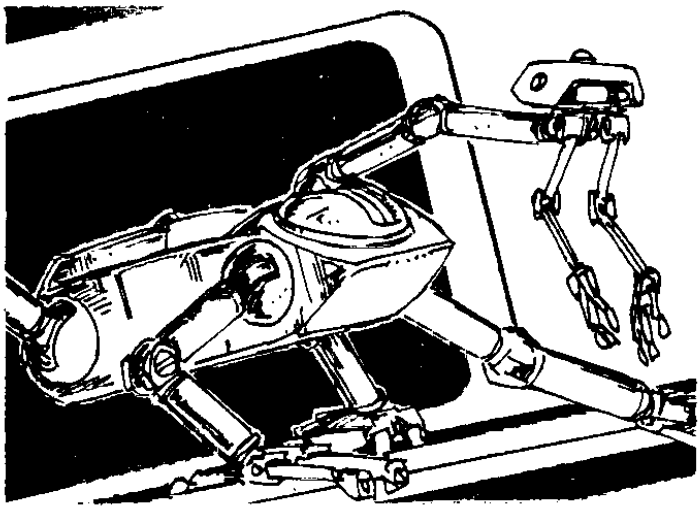
For gamers, here are her specs:
Frame size: Average
Str.: 9 M. Dex.: 10 Rea.: 14 Dri.: 14
Sta.: 9 Co-o: 11 Int.: 11 Stb.: 13
Disposition: Determined, Rational
S.P.I. Rating: 4.0
SKills gradings: Archeology (inc. Paleontology, Physical Geology, Comparative Technology): A
Engineering: B
General Sciences (Chemistry, Biology, Physics): B
Also has experience in Zero Gee and Vacuum Suit skills, Robotics and Computers, cross country and field survival.

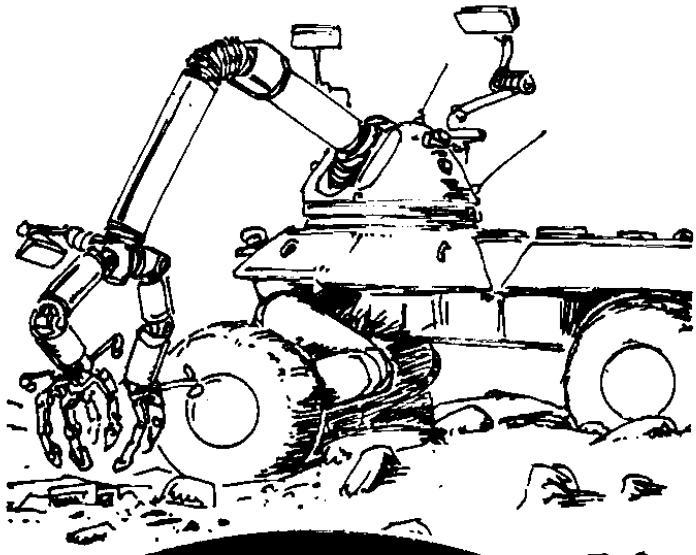
The general purpose robot isn't so much a single model as much as a series of sub-assemblies and specialized components which allow an operator to easily construct a custom use machine to suit various needs as they arise. The story so far has shown the so-called 'probe-bot,' a common body with zee-gee gripping legs and EVA thrusters. It also has a long necked sensor head with special analysis systems. For other applications, the same core could be fitted with wheels or special tools for repair or tied in with heavy equipment for civil engineering work. Coupled with automated medical support systems, a robot could conduct rescue and first-aid missions.

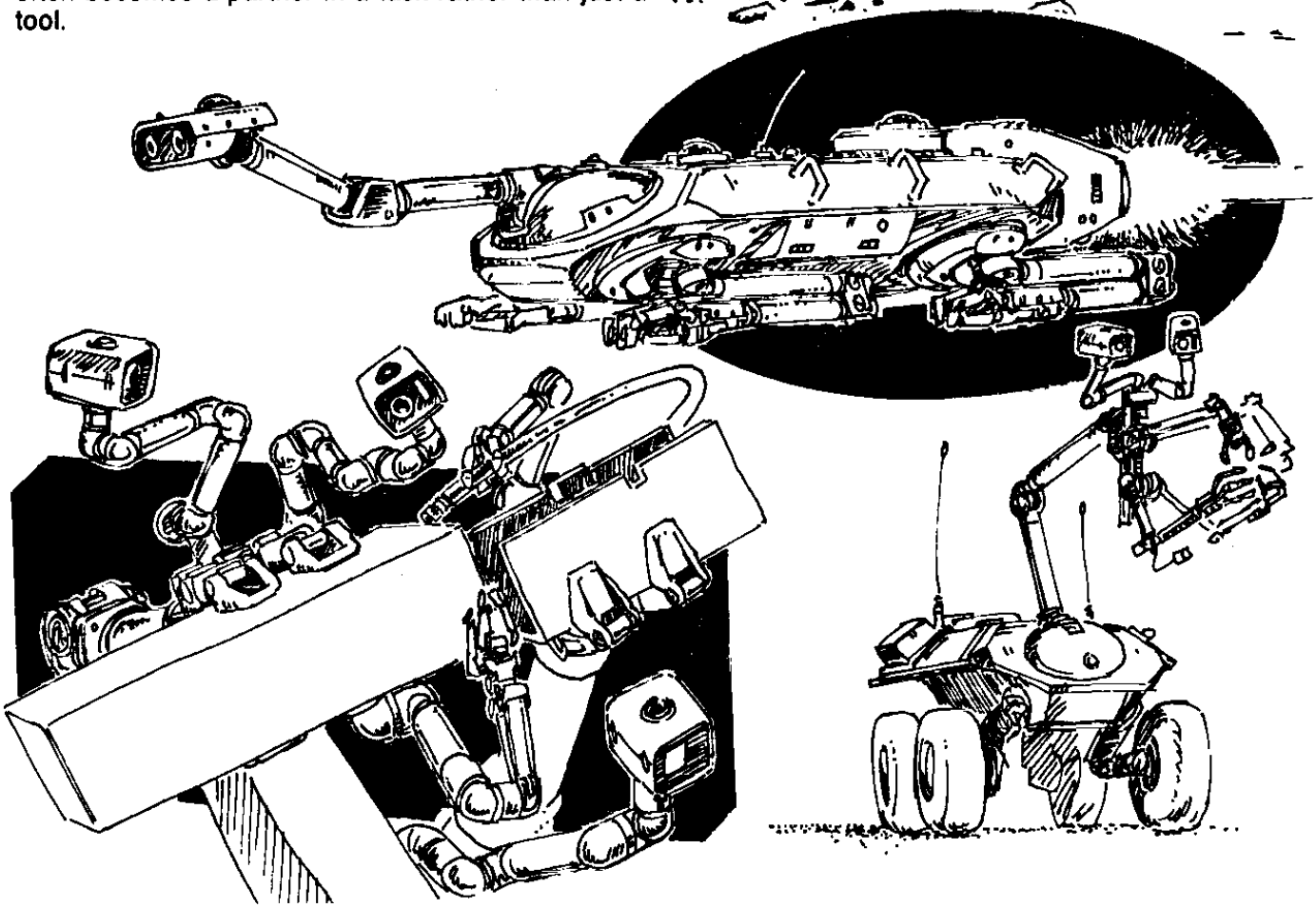
The processor can also be tied into other systems to control them as well. The space station action in part nine included a disembodied core tied into the control net of a space station which had had its computer disabled, and having done such, ran the station and dealt with the insurrectionists as best it could. The basic A.I. program can be very indepependent, not bound by Azimovian laws, it assesses the environment situationally against pre-established guidelines, and can operate at length as an independent agent.

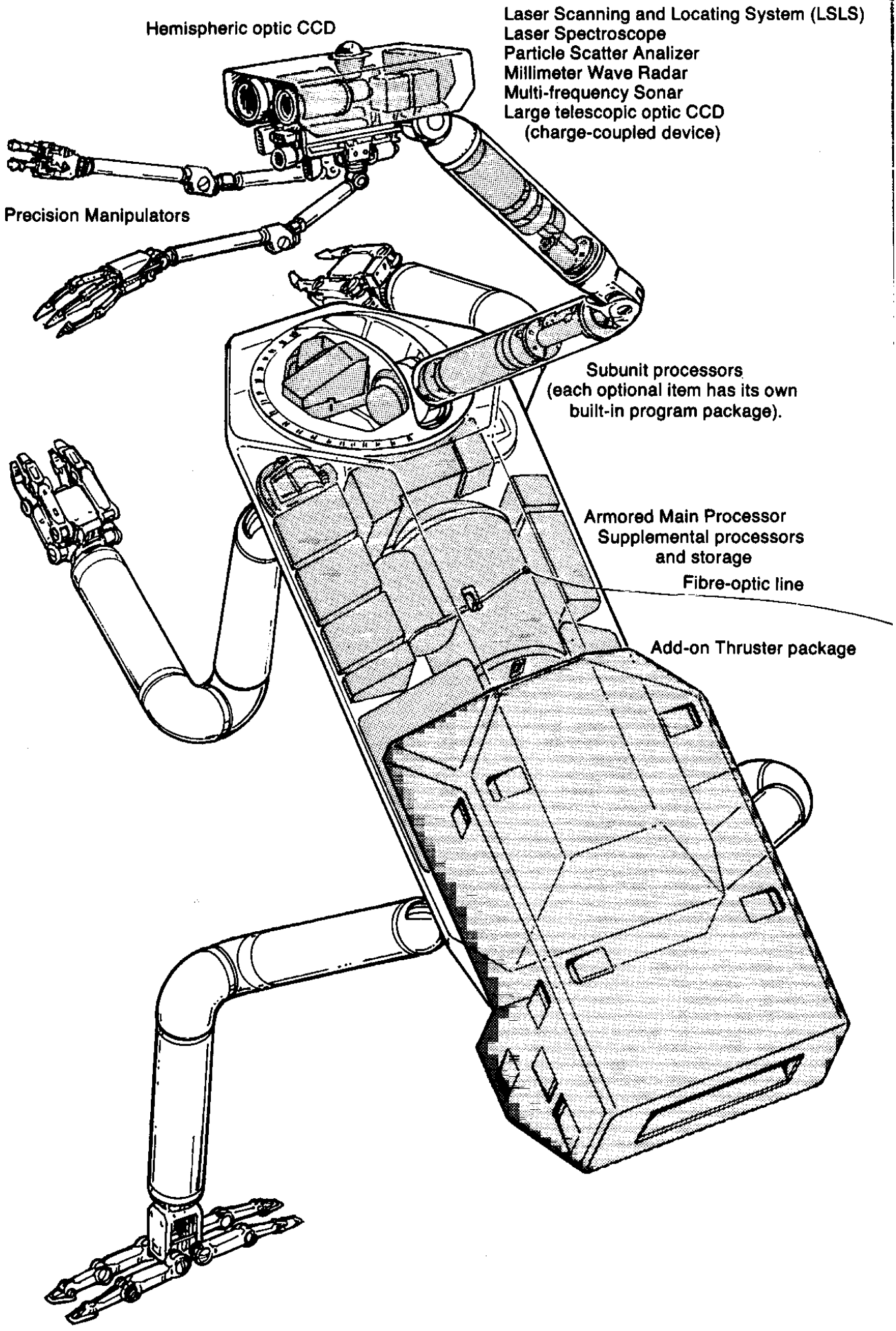
In the scenes with Dr. Kalakahzii inside the alien wreck, there is also shown a mini remote machine, with an extra set of precision manipulators and sensors, fibre-optically linked to the main robot and its full-size A.I. processor to go beyond the reach of the main machine. Such are usually semi-custom items, assembled out of common core remote vehicles with specialized equipment to match the application.

The processor core is an autonomous A.I. system, sophisticated enough to actively contribute to the decision-making process of the mission at hand, so often becomes a partner in a task rather than just a tool.








Hemispheric optic CCD
Laser Scanning and Locating System (LSLS)
Laser Spectroscope
Particle Scatter Analizer
Millimeter Wave Radar
Multi-frequency Sonar
Large telescopic optic CCD
(charge-coupled device)
Precision Manipulators
Subunit processors
(each optional item has its own
built-in program package).
Armored Main Processor
Supplemental processors
and storage
Fibre-optic line
Add-on Thruster package